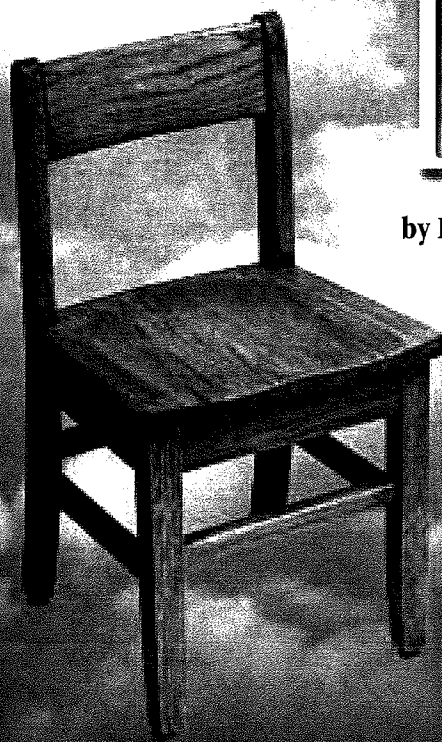


In a Neighborhood in Los Angeles

by Francisco X. Alarcón



What puts the grand in grandmother? This poem has some answers.

Connect to Your Life

You may have grandparents in your life. Or you may only know of grandparents through old photographs or your parents' stories. Recall what you know.

Key to the Poem

In a poem, the **speaker** is the voice that talks to the reader. The speaker may even use the word I to express a thought or a feeling. In this poem, the speaker is probably the poet himself talking about his own grandmother. In many other poems, the speaker and the poet may not be the same. A poet sometimes speaks through a character.



Reading Coach
CD-ROM selection

FOCUS

Find out the speaker's relationship with his grandmother.

I learned
Spanish
from my grandma

mijito

5 don't cry
she'd tell me

mijito

(mê hê' tō)
my son

on the mornings
my parents
would leave

10 to work
at the fish
canneries

my grandma
would chat

15 with chairs

sing them
old
songs

dance

20 waltzes with them
in the kitchen

when she'd say

niño barrigón

she'd laugh

niño

barrigón

(nē' nyô
bă rê gôn')
big boy

25 with my grandma
I learned
to count clouds

to point out
in flowerpots
30 mint leaves

my grandma
wore moons
on her dress

Mexico's mountains
35 deserts
ocean

in her eyes
I'd see them
in her braids

40 I'd touch them
in her voice
smell them

one day
I was told:
45 she went far away

but still
I feel her
with me

whispering
50 in my ear
mijito

THINK IT THROUGH

1. How does the speaker feel about his grandmother?
Find lines in the poem to support your answer.
2. What details from the poem show the grandmother's special qualities?
3. In what way do you think the speaker's grandmother remains with him?